WAMH Records Report to Trustees 1970 April

Box: 1 Folder: 17

Trustees
4/3/70

W A M F

Amherst College Radio

Amherst, Mass.

89.5 FM

This report is long and we apologize. It has been written with sufficient detail to inform the reader of our accomplishments, disappointments and role in the Amherst Community over the past 22 years. When time is an important consideration, we recommend that you skip to "Overview," on page 5 and continue from there. The report is then only 3 pages plus attachments.

RADIO STATION WAMF

REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

April, 1970

I. History

WAMF was licensed in 1948 by the Federal Communications Commission to be a carrier current (closed circuit) radio station. After seven years of broadcasting, the management requested and received permission to change to a 10 watt FM educational station. The first broadcast was at 88.5 megahertz on the FM band. We later moved to 89.5 so that WFCR could be set up.

II. Management

A) Owned by the Trustees of Amherst College, WAMF is totally managed and operated by the students of Amherst College with the occasional participation of Smith Students

B) The current management was elected on March 5, 1970 and assumed management functions on March 6, 1970.
   1) Inevitable problems incurred by the switch of management in mid-semester:
      a) Problems inherited from previous administrations
      b) Re-scheduling of shows
      c) Reworking of files
   2) Nevertheless, since they have taken office, the current management has instituted significant changes in both the physical layout and personnel of the station and plans to continue this trend in order to make WAMF even more responsive to the needs of the Amherst College Community.

III. Service to the Amherst College Community

A) News
   1) National
      a) From 1955 onward, national news came from the wires of United Press International whose services WAMF received at reduced college rates.
      b) UPI news was read on the hour by student announcers.
      c) WAMF reported the results of the draft lottery as the numbers were picked. It was the first reporting of the lottery in the valley.

d) In an effort to both improve the quality of the news reporting and to save money to put towards the projected power increase, the station has halted, temporarily, the UPI news service and has joined the Metromedia Radio Network. Metromedia provides WAMF with news on the hour read by professional newscasters. In September, 1970, provided the power increase is granted, WAMF will rejoin UPI or join AP for sports and local weather information.

2) Local

a) Apart from occasionally reading UPI stories over the air, WAMF has not had any "local," i.e. Pioneer Valley community, newscasts.

b) However, whenever a story of importance breaks on the Amherst campus, or on any of the other campuses in the area, the WAMF news department performs a vital service to the college community by informing it of the events as they occur.

c) In the past year, for example, the most notable examples of the WAMF news service on a local level occurred during the Moratorium and the building takeovers by the Black Community.

i) During the Moratorium, WAMF was the main source of information for students, faculty, administration, and the rest of the Five-College community.

ii) WAMF served as the communications center for the campus, collecting information, releasing announcements, covering meetings, and carrying the moratorium proceedings on the air live. The tapes that were made of the broadcasts proved invaluable in the evaluation of the events. Most other news sources, i.e. the Amherst Student, national newspapers, and radio and television stations, used our tapes and broadcasts in writing their stories.

iii) During the building takeover of February, 1970, WAMF was the only communications link between the blacks, the administration, and the rest of the college community.

iv) WAMF was the source through which the college was made aware of the building takeover and their later abandonment.

v) The WAMF news staff began working on the story as soon as the buildings were taken (2:00 A.M.) and stayed on the air throughout the day and into the night to keep the college informed.

vi) All meetings and gatherings that took place during this time were scheduled in such a way that the station could either broadcast live, tape, or send reporters to cover the events.*

* see Appendix A.

vii) In addition, WAMF served as the communications base for the more than 20 radio, television, and newspaper reporters who came from as far away as New York to cover the events of the day. WAMF was the source of information for all UPI and AP stories about the takeover. Also, the staff personally fed "beepers" (vocal reports) to more than 30 radio and television stations all over the country.

viii) No other form of communication could have operated as quickly and efficiently as radio in these circumstances. Only WAMF, of all the communications media, was in touch with both the blacks and the administration during the day and thus could present the total story to the college community.

ix) The administration publicly announced their appreciation for the live coverage, the instantaneous dissemination of information, and the dispelling of rumors.

x) During the Mt. Holyoke College takeover, WAMF behaved in a similar manner, striving to cover the events for its listening audience and for the national press.

B. Educational programs

1) Two hours of specifically educational programming per week, eventually expanding to four hours per week.
2) In conjunction with WFCR, the broadcasting of speeches, lectures, and concerts of interest to the college area.
3) Educational-entertainment shows (e.g. Specialty Shops) with knowledgeable people commenting on records and artists and various styles of music. One hour, four nights a week, eventually expanding to one-and-a-half hours a night.
   a) Blues
   b) Jazz
   c) Folk
   d) Golden Days of Radio - records and artists from the 20's thru the 60's
   e) Broadway music - 2 hours per week
4) Daily notices in the Community Bulletin Board about the events of interest occurring in the Five-College area.
5) Classical music - 3 hours a night, four nights a week, expanding to 4 hours a night. In addition, four or more hours of opera a week.
   a) The Classical Music Program Guide and the Opera Guide distributed at least a month in advance.
   b) Classical music 24 hours a day during exam week. In the past, this marathon program has been one of the most popular and best appreciated services of WAMF.

6) Occasional programs of special merit - e.g. original radio dramas, recorded plays, poetry reading, etc.
7) Coming next semester: "As Others See Us" - a program of news in translation from other countries done by Amherst College students.

C) Sports
1) Live telecasts of every Amherst football game
2) Telecasts of all home basketball games and most away games
3) Broadcasts of hockey, baseball, and swimming meets of interest
4) Daily sports round-up and sports quiz at midnight

D) Entertainment
1) WAMF attempts to appeal to the largest range of musical taste on campus, from classical music to progressive rock, from jazz to top 40, from folk to easy-listening. These diverse programs are scheduled to fit the general student's listening habits.
2) WAMF gives the campus listener more variety of music than any other station in the area.
3) Plus, beginning the week of April 6, WAMF will begin broadcasting 2 hours a day, five days a week, a show devoted to the review of new album releases to inform the listeners on the latest in the world of music.

E) Amherst Summer Action Program (ASAP)*
1) Last summer, the former General Manager of WAMF remained on campus to operate the radio station as part of the Amherst Summer Action Program.
2) WAMF was integrated into all three aspects of ASAP: the English Tutorial Institute, the ABC program, and the Smith-Amherst Tutorial.
3) WAMF's summer staff developed and trained the young students in basic radio skills: newscasting, announcing, programming, and operating the equipment.
4) WAMF participated intimately with the English instruction portion of the program by developing a sense of the oral medium in the students and by creating material for broadcast.
5) The station made available to the ASAP program as a whole, all of its studio facilities for recording, taping lectures, announcements, and special student productions, and also served as the communications center for the ASAP program. As the program took place on different campuses, WAMF proved useful as a communications link.

* see Appendix B.

6) WAMF was by far the most popular aspect of the ASAP with more than 30 students participating, all of whom, by the end of the summer, had had at least 3 hours a week of broadcasting and technical experience.
7) One of the disappointments of the program was the fact that WAMF was not sufficiently high in power for the youngsters to reach their families and friends in Springfield.
8) There is the tremendous potential for WAMF to serve, as it did last year, as an enriching educational experience for the summer program students. It can act dynamically not only as a community service providing news, information, and entertainment, but as a school of learning in the written and vocal arts as well.

IV. Overview

A. In a recent poll by the Ford Foundation, WAMF was found to be one of the six college stations in the nation that:
   1) gave no course credit for participation
   2) is completely managed and run by the students themselves
   3) gives no financial reimbursements to any student for participation in any form in the station

B) Inspite of that, or perhaps because of it, WAMF has assumed an active and integral role in the life of Amherst College. WAMF is on the air seven days a week to inform, educate, and entertain the students of Amherst College as well as the surrounding area.

C) Over the past years, WAMF has:
   1) Steadily diversified its format to try to encompass and serve all musical tastes on campus.
   2) Expanded and improved the physical facilities of the station, e.g. a new board, a larger record collection
   3) Expanded its staff to include more student members.

D) In times of emergency and/or fast-breaking news (moratoria, building takeovers, national and local elections, draft lottery, etc.) the college and the students assume the station will be there to keep them informed of what is happening. It is at times such as these that WAMF is absolutely indispensable to Amherst College. It performs a function, the rapid dissemination of information, that no other medium or campus facility can match or duplicate.

E) In September, 1970, WMUA (University of Massachusetts Radio) will go up in power. When it does, because of its proximity to WAMF on the FM dial (89.5--91.1), the coverage area of WAMF will be reduced to almost nil. Only those students with the finest FM receivers who happen to be within 1,000 yards of the antenna on Stearns Tower will be able to receive WAMF, and then only with great difficulty. *

F) If WAMF does not go up in power, it will probably go off the air. With the extremely limited range to which it will be confined, it will no longer be the effective facility that it is and can be with a power increase.

*see Appendix C.

G) After 22 years of service to the Amherst College community, WAMF would cease to exist. This would create a drastic and irreperable gap in the life of the students of the college. There would be:
   1) No more instant news service.
   2) No more student-oriented and student-run educational activity on a regularly scheduled basis, available to each student, free of charge, in his own room.
   3) No more public service and entertainment for and by Amherst students.
   4) No more organization in which students can participate in the largest single extracurricular activity on campus.

H) We, the members of WAMF, feel that our purpose, that of informing, educating, and entertaining the Amherst College Community, is important and worthwhile enough to warrant the tremendous amount of time and effort we put in seven days a week. To discontinue our activities would be to deprive the community of the service which we have the privilege and pleasure to perform.

I) This service is irreplaceable. The college will be doing itself a tremendous disservice by not granting the power increase to WAMF and thus effectively shutting it off the air. WAMF must get the power increase to survive and to continue to serve Amherst College.

The purpose of a college is to open doors, to provide opportunities, and to incite thought and action, not separately but together. When a young man goes to a residential college he is, presumably, asking for 24-hour education - education in the class and laboratory, as a performer or observer of the arts, as writer or editor, on the playing fields, in his room, and in the hundreds of unplanned and unexpected situations which he may encounter. His education can become meaningful through his experiences with a single teacher, an extracurricular activity, a literary society, a book, or the ideas of a classmate.

This is Amherst, 1968

We ask your help in our attempt to keep WAMF on the air.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Rubin, General Manager
Ramon Valenzuela, Administrative Director
David Pilgrim

WAMF finds itself in trouble for three reasons:

1) WMUA at 91.1 is going up in power
2) Springfield College's radio station is going up in power at 89.7
3) The FCC will force all 10 watt stations to go up in power or stop broadcasting within the next 5 years.

All 10 watt stations in our area are going up in power because of #3 and they are going up now because frequencies are still available and the equipment is cheap(comparatively). WMUA, WFCR and Springfield College's radio station will make it difficult for Amherst students and students from other valley colleges to receive our signal. Many Amherst students will not receive us at all, others will pick up a very weak signal and only the best FM receivers will pick up a clear signal. We have two alternatives if we are to remain accessible to the Amherst Community. We can go carrier current or go up in power. Both cost approximately the same and we feel that the second is the better. FM has better sound, a larger coverage area (carrier current would be campus only), and the potential to improve with new developments.

After speaking to people at WFCR about engineering, we have hired Edward Perry Jr. '63 as our consultant. He has recommended that we go to 3000 watts effective radiated power. We expect to buy our equipment from CCA Electronics. The equipment and prices follow:

	1.5 kw transmitter	$ 6,495	
	5-bay circularly polarized antenna	2,500	
	5 antenna heaters	750	approx
	Frequency and modulation monitors	1,800	
	CBS Volumax	695	
	Wire	180	approx
	Fittings	225	
*	Installation of everything except the antenna	240	
	Installation of the antenna	500	estimate
*	Paper work for FCC	1,150	
	2 playback cartridge machines	1,596	
	1 recording amplifier	400	
	Total	$ 16,551	

Ed has promised to return one half of his fees to the Alumni Fund for use by WAMF. The cost is then reduced to $ 15,881. We are currently negotiating with WMHT in Schenectady about our moving to 89.3MHz. Trinity College's radio station will have to move if we are to go to 89.3 and if WMHT is successful in their attempts at this, we will move to 89.3 and WMHT will pay for, at least, our antenna and its installation. The cost is then $ 12,881. WAMF has saved half of this year's budget to put towards the power increase and we can contribute $ 4,000. We then need $ 8,881. We have sacrificed much this year to contribute to the power increase and hope to make up for it in

service next year. We will have to spend much more of our budget for records, tapes and a wire service and not so much for a power increase- I estimate about $ 1,500. Also, since Student Council has disolved, we cannot go to them for support. We must therefore ask that the Trustees aid us financially. We recognize that there are other important interests that need money so we do not expect a grant. We would, however, appreciate a loan and grant. Perhaps $ 4,440 in grant and $ 4,441 in long term loan. We could then use the aforementioned $ 1,500 dollars a year to pay back the loan.

note The power increase will effect our daily operation only by the requirement that a holder of an FCC 1st Class license check the transmitter five days a week. This means more work for our chief engineer and, should the situation arise that no student at Amherst has a license, we will have to hire an engineer. The rate is on the order of $ 660 a year. Next year and probably the next four years can be handled by a member of the class of 1974 who is interested in working for WAMF. We are still working on a permanent solution. One would be Mr. Grose's hiring of an FCC 1st Class engineer (see Appendix D). Ed Perry has assured us that he will find us an engineer for about $660 a year in the event that we are unable to supply our own.

David Pilgrim